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AUTHOR Iwao, Sumiko
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ABSTRACT

In this paper, case studies of two successful Japanese businesswomen illustrate how traditional Japanese cultural values and female sex roles have enabled women to succeed in business. These two cases were chosen as representative from a sample of 56. The businesses discussed are in very different sectors of the economy. One is a traditional and expensive Japanese restaurant. This type of business has historically been owned or operated by women. The other is a veterinary pharmaceuticals company, an area in which women have not traditionally been involved. Despite strong personality differences between the two women, both businesses are successful, partially because their owners exhibit values of thrift, industriousness, harmony and avoidance of conflict, and empathy, all of which are associated with the traditional female sex role in Japan. (IS)

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# Skills and Life Strategies of Japanese Business Women

Dr. Sumiko Iwao

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Dr. Sumiko Iwao

# Skills and Life Strategies of Japanese Business Women

## Introduction

Different cultures provide different opportunities and conditions for the development of human potential. And the way people express their potential is the product of the historical, cultural and natural conditions surrounding them. Japanese women are not exceptions. Therefore, it is necessary to look into their historical and cultural background to have better understanding of the following two cases of women in small businesses.

A century ago, at the time of the Meiji Restoration (1868), eighty per cent of Japan's population was involved in agriculture; since that time the country has moved rapidly toward industrialization. But even in its agrarian stage, Japanese society was significantly different from other

contemporary agrarian societies for the following reasons: Given the large proportion of mountainous terrain, a high percentage of the population lived in the coastal areas of arable land where the soil is not very rich; this resulted in small scale labor intensive farming with maximum itilization of all available land. It is a common sight in rural Japan to see very precisely laid out, small terraced rice fields. It was thus originally out of necessity that Japanese paid a great deal of attention to minute details which we find today in contemporary Japanese arts, cookery, the making of industrial products, as well as in human relations. The latter can be clearly seen in both of the following cases: in Mrs. Edo's high level of sensitivity to interpersonal relations and in Mrs. Tanaka's precision in her choice of gifts and training of her employees.

There were neither multiple nor abundant rice crops in old Japan and the barely sufficient crops depended upon the conditions of weather, on the amount of rain and on the temperature. Japan not only has four distinct seasons but the weather is also extremely variable from day to day. Therefore farmers have to plan each day's work very carefully, anticipating the weather. Neglecting to do the appropriate things at the right time could mean complete destruction of the crop. Attention has to be paid to the subtle indications of on-coming change in the natural world. Additionally, the frequent typhoons which ravage Japan at

harvest time sometimes wipe out crops completely. The sensitivity to subtle differences or minute detail, which came out of agricultural necessity, has persisted well after Japan urbanized.

In subsistence farming under conditions of unpredictability, a high value was placed on industriousness. Men and women worked side by side in the fields from very early in the morning till late into the night. In addition to their work as laborers, women's most significant role was that of distributor of food. Women were responsible for stretching a limited amount of food among a large number of mouths and for making it last through scarce times between harvests. They had to make the best use of whatever little they had and this was where their ingenuity was highly valued. This role and its concomitant abilities have made women the pivotal members of the family. Women were required to be extremely diligent, ingenious in planning, thifty, capable of exercising a strong sense of justice and needed to have a talent for averting conflict within the family.

Their additional role in controlling the supply of sake, although they themselves did not usually drink it, increased their power over men as managers of the household.

The second significant function in the woman's role was responsibility for clothing the family. This required the

development of further skills and ingenuity which greatly enhanced their managerial role in the family. Women were also traditionally the weavers and tailors for the family.

The transition from an agrarian to an urban society was accompanied by the transition from an autarchic to a monetary economy in which men were the breadwinners earning income in work outside the family while women remained in charge of the family budget in keeping with their historical role as family managers. Their ingenuity and creativity in controlling and husbanding the family's resources gave women a sense of responsibility, freedom and self-expression which was unique to their situation.

The historic context of scarcity of resources has left a long lasting impact upon the Japanese and it can be seen in the behavior of contemporary Japanese women. As we shall see, both Mrs. Edo and Mrs. Tanaka's reluctance to expand their business and to engage in risk-taking is one example. This is also seen in the Japanese propensity to save for rainy days. Yet, there is a strong bias against miserliness. Money "circulates around in the world" [kane wa tenka no mawarimono] and therefore, one should not try to monopolize it or hope to keep it forever; just as typhoons destroy rich harvests leaving almost nothing, we cannot depend on money. This sort of distrust in the power of money has made the Japanese place more value in other things, such as good

human relations based on trust.

If even hard work cannot make life easy, where do people find compensatory satisfaction? One way is in the belief that one is doing one's best and that therefore there is no need to blame oneself if one's expectations have not been realized. If you keep high moral standards, you should not be ashamed of yourself even if things do not go well and people will accept you as you are. Another way is to be grateful for whatever little one has or to convince oneself that one finds pleasure in work itself. This is particularly strong in the case of Mrs. Edo. Another is to expect the worst. While in America, people are motivated by maintaining positive expectations, Japanese are motivated by the comfort which comes from being prepared for possible failure. This may lead to reluctance in taking risks.

Women in Small Businesses.

Though men are responsible for the legal and developmental aspects of their business enterprises, women as shopkeepers and managers of small businesses also exhibit talents for managing personnel. Goals of harmony and avoidance of conflict are cultivated in women in the home and their abilities to achieve these are carried naturally in the work arena. Very often women provide the real power behind

the scenes in the running of businesses [shikkari mono no okamisan]. A highly developed sense of empathy with the customer lay at the foundation of a relationship of trust which takes priority over the profit-making incentive among these women. The long lasting sense of trust and the constant desire to please the customers are factors responsible for a stability in market relations and the endurance of small family businesses; these skills are carried on today just as they have been in the past. They denote relationships between the buyer and the seller entirely different fromthose found in other cultures, one manifestation of this can be seen in the tradition of not tipping. Service is inherent and given freely by the seller, rather than something to be purchased or earned by the buyer.

I. The traditional model.

Mrs. Edo is a dainty woman with fair skin who dresses elegantly in kimonos of good taste. She is quiet and always modest to the point of being self-demeaning. Her manners and movement are graceful and she has great self-control. She "wraps up" people with her sincerity and warmth. She repeatedly asked how a story of somebody like her who has no special talent could be of use to an interviewer. Her question was asked not out of politeness but said in all sincerity.

Mrs. Edo, now seventy, was the fifth-generation owner of a reknowned Asakusa Japanese restaurant, "Ichinao," which has been in operation for 250 years. Mrs. Edo has handed ownership of the restaurant to her second son, but was exclusively responsible for its post-World War II restoration and success.

Her restaurant is in Asakusa, the older section of downtown Tokyo on the bank of the river Sumida. This place is particularly famous for its grand fireworks during summer. The neighborhood developed around the Asakusa Kannon Temple which dates back to the 7th century. There are many small shops along the way to the Temple which are always crowded with visitors looking for colorful souvenirs. Because of the temple, there are many stores which specialize in Buddhist ornaments and ceremonial goods. As many visitors wanted to have a good time in Asakusa after paying their respects to the temple, many restaurants and theaters appeared, making this a traditional entertainment center. Asakusa is representative of old Tokyo in many ways, especially with regard to interpersonal relations. There are closely knit ties within the community.

Ichinao is a <u>ryotei</u>. Although the word ryotei is translated as "restaurant" in English, ryotei are quite different from regular restaurants with big dining rooms.

Ryotei are high class Japanese style restaurants. They are housed in traditional Japanese buildings with separate rooms for dining. You never share a room with another group and usually one room is completely reserved for the whole evening for one party of customers. Therefore, customers are not accepted without a reservation. After the customers are shown into a room, the sliding door is closed and therfore, completely private dining is guaranteed.

The Japanese style room is decorated with a flower arrangement and a hanging scroll and the aesthetic quality of the room is highly valued. The room and its objects, the garden and dishes are meant to be appreciated for their elegance and beauty, as is the food itself. Full course dinners are served course by course, and a great deal of attention is paid to the dishes being used and details of arrangement of food on the dishes.

Okami, the female owner, usually appears once during the evening to welcome customers and thank them for coming and also to see them off as the guests are leaving. It is the role of the female owner to see to it that every need of the customers, even the unspoken ones, are met, and that they go home satisfied with the excellent service and good food. Enjoying the atmosphere of the room is an important part of the evening at a ryotei.

Mrs. Edo learned her trade by a natural apprenticeship to her mother- and father-in-law. Mrs. Edo's mother-in-law, former female owner of Ichinao, played a key role in running Ikedain the past and Mrs. Edo acquired the necessary skills by observing her. The role of her father-in-law was that of master chef. He represented the Asakusa Ryotei Association. He was highly respected by other members of the association because of his good judgment, and people used to come for his advice whenever problems occurred. He seemed to know the importance of the role of the female owner as the manager of the restaurant and Mrs. Edo thinks that it was because of this that he was very demanding and strict. She was only seventeen when she got married and used to miss her own home, her loving parents and her many sisters and brothers, thus his high standards occasionally seemed oppressive to her. Mrs. Edo's father-in-law was especially strict about manners and all his daughters were sent to other families for gyogi minari.
(Mastering of social graces and proper manners through observation by living with a good family.)

At ryotei, prices are not listed nor is there such a thing as a menu; the customers expect the food to be expensive and in return to be guaranteed an evening of good food and impeccable care. Usually, customers are either introduced or are regular guests and are known to the restaurant. They do not pay immediately after dining; a bill

is sent later. There thus has to be a relationship of trust between the restaurant and the customers.

The daughter of a family of five sons and five daughters who owned a Buddhist religious artifact store in Asakusa, Mrs. Edo was discovered by her future parents-in-law, then owners of the Ikeda Restaurant, when she was seventeen years old. The future parents-in-law happened to be shopping at the store of her parents when she was minding the store. Because of her beauty, personality, kindness and willingness to serve and please the customers, they regarded her as the ideal wife for their son, although her own parents initially opposed the match on the grounds that the restaurant business (as part of the "water trades" [mizushobai]) was neither stable nor sufficiently respectable for the daughter of a stable merchant fmily. Usually, women brought up in karyukai [flower and willow world] another euphemism for the entertainment industry are considered to be suited to the role of female owner of a restaurant because they know how to deal with customers who have had drinks, especially when they are a little the worse for alcohol. The marriage was the choice and the decision of the parents of her future husband rather than by his own free will. Therefore, she felt sorry for her husband who had to put up with her even when she was obliged to respect his parents wishes above those of her husband. She was hesitant about the marriage but the Edos persisted because they regarded her as especially suitable

because she had been brought up in a stable family. The marriage took place with little consideration for her future husband's opinion. It was obvious that the marriage was an arrangement to benefit the whole family, rather than the individuals involved. Because of the way the marriage took place, Mrs. Edo has always felt indebted to her parents-in-law and tried to live up to their expectations. This has made her husband jealous and unhappy.

The early years of her marriage were extremely difficult due to the fact that her husband's mother dies when he was young, leaving him with a demanding step mother and strict father who ruled the family with an iron hand. Since Mrs. Edo's two sisters-in-law had been sent off to receive instruction in social graces among prominent families, one of which was the family of the founding president of Waseda University, she found herself obliged to attend to her parents-in-law conscientiously. Every night she would wait on them until they retired late in the evening and then she would rise early in the morning to serve her father-in-law tea before he went off to the wholesale market for the restaurant, which was susually before six o'clock. While her husband was out on such business as attending restaurant association's gatherings, she was required to look after the business and all the workers, fifty altogether, and therefore, she never went out alone with her husband. Much demand was placed upon her as the wife of the heir of a

famous old restaurant. Her responsibilities were heavy under the family system in which emphasis was placed on the family line rather than the interests and desire of the individual.

Her young husband was sent to Osaka for training at two very prestigious restaurants for three years, leaving her alone to look after the house, restaurant and parents. The birth of a small and sickly baby added to her troubles. The practice of receiving training under a master other than one's own parents was considered to provide a better opportunity to learn. One is expected to be more patient, and to learn better, under a master who is not a blood realtive. Her husband became a very able chef and those working under him respected him and obeyed him completely. But after his death it was at times difficult to control the chefs employed at the restaurant and Mrs. Edo was often sorry that she herself had had no professional training as a chef.

She bore five children before her husband died, placing her in charge of the Ikeda Restaurant. It was only for the two and a half years between his father's retirement and his early death that her husband was in charge of the restaurant. When Mrs. Edo was first faced with the responsibility of running the restaurant alone because of her husband's death and her father-in-law-s infirmity, she had had no formal experience at all. Only a highly developed sense of empathy for the customers--her primary motivation in running the

rstaurant came from a compelling desire to please--helped her manage. Under her direction, the restaurant rapidly gained a reputation for excellence. It is clear that her motive to maintain good relations with those around her is stronger than her motive to achieve. Perhaps, it is more accurate to say that these two motives are not in conflict, but rather that satisfactory human relations means achievement and success to her.

When the war broke out, all luxury businesses were frowned upon, and as an act of patriotism, her father-in-law decided to turn over most of his accumulated wealth to the government to aid the war efforts. The money her father-in-law had put aside for the entire family to live comfortably on for the rest of their lives lost its value due to extremely high inflation. The site of the original restaurant was in the Asakusa Park, and the property, six times as large as the present one with a beautiful garden, was turned over to the government. Her father-in-law closed the restaurant saying that serving food bought at the black market would ruin the name of the restaurant and he would not be able to "hold his head up" before his ancestors.

Thus, when the war ended, the family found themselves in extreme penury, without capital or resources to start over. They did not even own a house. Mrs. Edo was living in a small rented house on the outskirts of Tokyo. One day, a

former customer passed by the house and was surprised to see her playing with her children in front of the house. He asked her what she was doing there and urged her to return to Asakusa by saying that it was a great loss for the community that such a renowned restaurant with such a long history had disappeared. He scolded her for not telling her former customers about the difficult situation her family was in.

Remembering her outstanding reputation, a group of former customers rallied around to encourage her to reopen the restaurant, and raised money to acquire new premises and to set her on her feet. The restaurant was reopened but the taxes were very high and she found herself with mounting debts. She thought then that it would not be long before she had to close the restaurant again. She sold everything of value she had including her jewelry and her best kimonos. As her natal family ties were very close she held a meeting with her brothers to discuss her difficult situation and they decided to let her borrow a certain amount of money from a small credit union with their endorsement. It turned out that the man who used to supply Ikeda with vegetables had made a lot of money and by that time had risen to be the president of the credit union. He remembered how very kind Mrs. Edo used to be and wanted to be of some help so that he could pay her back for her generosity. He set up credit on his own property necessary for the loan so that she could borrow money from the union.

Mrs. Edo, in her overriding desire to please the customers, made no profit whatosever during the first years. Though food supplies were bought at inflated prices on the black market she did not charge the customers expensive bills. She recalls that in these first several years after the war, her business consistently ran a monthly deficit of 200,000 yen.

She wrote a letter to a former customer asking for advice. This customer, the president of Mitsui Construction Company, offered her a space in his office building to run a lunch/coffee shop; at the same time she worked in the Fuji Television Broadcasting Company cafeteria in the evenings making bento (lunch boxes) for employees. She worked hard, harder than anybody else, thinking that if she did so her children and employees would try as hard as they could too. She worked until her "bones were ground into powder." Her reputation for preparing lunch boxes became so widely spread that Sankei Newspapers asked her to provide lunch box services for their company cafeteria, too. During this time her primary concerns were to repay her debts and to maintain her high standards of service to customers; her own personal comfort and living conditions were secondary to these. Nevertheless, this attitude of empathy and servitude to the customers proved to be the key to her success; doing so she has gained their trust. This was also critical in her family

life since she had to provide strong and empathetic guidance to her five children in the absence of their father. It was also comforting to her that her brothers all extended support and help to her.

In accordance with her Buddhist religous upbringing, she also had a strong sense of obligation to her ancestors as to the task of restoring the Ikeda Restaurant to its previously unchallenged standards of excellence. Because of her commitment to perfection, her customers frequently offered to help her extend her operations, but she refused to compromise either on quality or detail through expansion. Today, the restaurant has ten chefs and eight maids and operates on a much smaller scale than that of the time when her father-in-law and her husband were in charge.

Because her first son was sickly, it fell to her second son to take over the business even though this meant his sacrificing a college education for fear that it would jeopardize his commitment to the family restaurant. The second son was a very good student and was eager to go on to a university with his teacher's encouragement. Mrs. Ebara still feels badly that she could not let him receive the college education which he wanted so badly. Instead, as part of his training, he accompanied the Japanese ambassador--her late husband's classmate at a private grammar school--to Austria s the official embassy chef. Upon his return to

Japan his mother arranged his marriage to the daughter of a Kyoto sushi-restauranteur, a girl from the "water trades." Mrs. Edo does not approve of some of the attitudes her daughter-in-law holds, while she calls her a "good business woman" but denigrating the fact that she "likes to make money too much."

Mrs. Edo's major concern was not to ruin the name of Ichinao, a restaurant with such a long history and tradition, and carry on the business until the next heir was ready to take over. Therefore, her approach to business is more passive or defensive, and therefore, she does not want to expand. She is not assertive verbally but wins respect from those working under her by quietly working very hard and sets herself up as a model that people working under her would be proud to follow.

Mrs. Edo is a classic example of a traditional Japanese business woman attaining success through placing greater emphasis on good quality and service rather than on profit-making.

II. The modern model.

Making a striking contrast to Mrs. Edo is the model offered by Mrs. Tanaka, president of an importing company for

veterinary pharmaceuticals. Mrs. Tanaka, who is now 59, is quite attractive with big almond shaped eyes. She dresses elegantly in fashionable clothes and is extremely confident and impressive. Her cheerfulness and sense of humour softens her strict approach to her workers.

She was born in Seoul, Korea in 1922 to a family of five children. Her father was conducting a medicine distribution business, which distributed medicines to all over Korea and Manchuria. There was a dormitory attached to their home for those young men working for her father. They were mostly people who had come to Seoul from Japan seeking better opportunities than what was available for them in Japan. There were always about thirty people living there.

Her mother looked after the dormitory and also played the role of mother to the boarders--taking care of their food, clothing and shelter. She supervised both the Korean and the Japanese servants, cooked meals for almost forty people three times a day, did the laundry, and sewed all clothing and bedding. She cooked various dishes of the boarders' home- land for the people who were away from their parents, and special dishes during festivals and New Year. She tried very hard to make everyone happy and ease their homesickness by making various delicious foods. All the boarders liked Mrs. Tanaka's mother, and from the boarders her mother would learn a great deal of things related to her

husband's job. She would give serious thought to these things and sometimes she would give valuable advice to her father. Therefore, Mrs. Tanaka thinks that her father's business success owes a great deal to her mother. Mrs. Tanaka, by observing what her mother did and how she helped her husband, learned a lot which became useful in her later years when she started her own business.

According to Mrs. Tanaka, her mother's life was not unusual but the normal way of life for a merchant's wife. Women in those days never took a leading role but instead, bore and brought up a lot of healthy children, made every effort to assist their husband's job, have good relations with many epople, worked actively, and tried hard to learn new things.

Mrs. Tanaka was brought up in such an environment. Her parents expected and hoped that she would become a "good wife and wise mother" which was thought to be the ideal type of woman to be, and they educated and prepared her according to their ideal. Her parents found a husband for her and she married him when she was twenty years old. Even though both her brother and herself had learnt their father's trade and became licensed to practice pharmacy, her parents did not expect her to work and even opposed her taking up a job.

A year after Japan entered the second World War, her

husband was drafted after three months of married life. At that time she was already pregnant. Three years later, when the war ended and Korea became independent, she came back to Japan with a three-year-old son, a small amount of money enough for four or five months living costs for two of them and all the luggage she could carry besides her baby. Everything else had to be left behind. A year after her return to Japan, the government notified her that her husband with whom she had lived only three months, had died on the battlefield, three days before the end of the war. Without adequate shelter, food and money, she and her family had to go through much difficulty as did many other Japanese at that time. A year after the notice of her husband's death, her son died from malnutrition. This too made her plunge into her work.

In Seoul, her life was quite comfortable as a daughter of a big pharmaceutical distributor and later as the wife of an officer. But the life back in Japan was very miserable and it was obviously necessary for her to work if she wanted to survive. When it became necessary for her to work, she said to herself that she would never work in a business where she had to be seen primarily as a woman such as becoming a hostess, nor engage in a business whose customers were only limited to women. When starting to work, pharmaceutical business seemed the natural thing to choose as she was brought up observing her father, and also, both she and her

brother had licenses as pharmacists. Her older brother had returned from the war and started a pharmaceutical distributing business in Kyoto. She first worked for a wholesale pharmacist for three years or so but then left and began to help her brother. She did not have much warm feeling toward her brother nor his wife. She commented that her brother was not particularly talented nor experienced as a pharmacist but he got a license simply because he was the heir to their father. As a widow, she was not a welcomed member of the family, especially by her brother's wife. It was apparent that her brother's home was not a place where she could stay long. She worked with her brother for a year and a half and accumulated a small amount of money as a broker. But about that time, she was swindled out of all she had except for a small piece of property in Tokyo which is where her company is today. So she left Kyoto and moved to Tokyo.

Now in her late twenties, she had to start over once again. She was interested in regular pharmaceutical drugs but she knew that they were too expensive a proposition for her to engage in given her lack of financial resources. But dealing in drugs for household pets and small livestock was financially more possible, and even though at that time only the American Occupation army and their families could afford to have pets, she could already foresee that Japan's growing post-war prosperity meant that Japanese families would soon

enjoy the luxury of having pets. Furthermore, she had a friend who suggested that distemper vaccinations would be a good thing to start with and they started an importing business together as partners. But soon her partner wanted to monopolize this business and its profits so they parted, and Mrs. Tanaka found herself on her own again. She started her own business. She anticipated that a market for household pets and small livestock would develop and began importing high-quality drugs from abroad. She conducted a preliminary survey among Dutch, British and American companies to identify the most promising products. She settled on the Phillips Company from the Netherlands which manufactured veterinary pharmaceuticals as well as electric products on the grounds that the Netherlands was a comparably small country producing high quality products at competitive prices. This was the beginning of the Kyoritsu Shoji Company which she started with three or four employees but has now grown to be a company with three hundred employees.

After starting with distemper vaccinations for dogs, she ventured into drugs for chickens. She thought that she should eventually establish a research institute where she could test new drugs before applying to the Japanese government for permission to import and sell. Only a week after she mentioned her plan of acquiring a piece of property on which she could build an institute to a mentor, she was notified of a 6000 tsubo property which had been placed on

the market because the owner was moving to Brazil and needed to get rid of it quickly. She had only five million yen but the owner was willing to sell it to her for that amount of money so the property came into her possession. A year later, the area was designated as Tsukuba University Town and Research Centers, and all the research institutes with which she had dealings moved to that site from Tokyo. The value of the property today is phenomenal. It was there she started working on obtaining data on chickens using vaccinations which she had imported experimentally. She consulted frequently with her mentor, Dr. Kawashima, who was considered to be the top man in the field.

Though she began by importing distemper vaccinations for sale to American Occupation families she gradually extended her business to Japanese middle-class families whose affluence had increased as she had predicted. She expanded her business to include drugs for larger farm animals--cows, horses, pigs, etc. Furthermore, she kept abreast of the latest developments in the veterinary medical field by going abroad every couple of years. Simultaneously she instituted the practice of bringing leading American and European veterinarians every year to lecture in regular seminars in four major cities in Japan to their Japanese counterparts. This served the multiple purposes of establishing herself in the Japanese veterinary community, of rendering the practitioners a service for which they were indebted to her,

of maintaining her in a position of "gatekeeper" of new information on animal drugs, and of legitimizing and enhancing her role as supplier of imported products to the Japanese market.

Besides inviting noted lecturers from abroad, and holding seminars, she puts out two different journals, one for scholars in the field, and the other for the general public twice a year which includes translated information on the care and treatment of small animals. Because such information in Japanese is scarce, her efforts have been very much appreciated. This has not only helped her establish herself in Japan but also to establish herself abroad.

She went on to forecast that with the advent of jet travel Japan would move into the mass importation of chickens from abroad, and she proceeded to develop vaccinations for the various diseases, especially Newcastle's disease, which she thoughtwould be imported as well. Shortly after, Newcastle's disease was brought into Japan with imported chickens and it became so widely spread that it proved to be the most serious problem for those farmers in the chicken business. The Japanese government decided to import vaccination drugs for chickens from abroad on an emergency basis then, and the data her research institute had obtained four years before became extremely useful. It was the only research institute with the data necessary for obtaining

government permits for imports. The whole situation was written up widely in newspapers and she "made money without even the need to advertise." Surely, she was very lucky but it was not only luck which brought her great success. It has always been her policy to import only high quality drugs even though the price was high. Only by doing so could she establish her reputation as a very reliable importer.

She has been very clever in forecasting which diseases are likely to spread and consequently, which vaccinations will be needed. She duplicated her results with the chickens by such foresight and practical preparation when mink and racehorses were imported as Japan's prosperity increased.

Mrs. Tanaka's emphasis on quality is reflected in her thorough laboratory testing of all her products. This is yet another aspect of her long-term planning. Her testing has usually preceded by a considerable length of time the Ministry of Agriculture's decision to approve the drugs in question. She maintains that she values the superior qualtiy of imported European drugs over domestic products and that she has been vindicated by the fact that people did not mind paying more for proven quality. She does not forget to sharpen her sensitivity by going abroad every two years to see not only drug-related businesses but also to see what people are interested, and what kind of fashions are popular, etc. She frequently visits users of the vaccinations to see

their needs herself so that she will be a step ahead of others in the field, and she also spends time in the places where many people gather so that she will be able to forecast accurately how the world is turning.

Her policy is also reflected in her dealing with banks. She does not borrow more money from the bank than is absolutely necessary, nor tries to expand her business much. But she seems to know how to make the largest profit out of whatever she does. She has adopted her elder sister's son and hopes he will succeed her in the business eventually. Rather than train him herself, she sent him to England to be trained and let him start a new business other than pharmaceutical import. The business he came up with is connected with disinfectants for men's rooms. In order to break into this totally new field, she successfully surveyed only the first class places--the Imperial Hotel, Ministry of Finance, the Bank of Japan, Mitsukoshi Department Store, Tokyo International Airport. She thinks this method is as effective as other types of advertisements. She then has pamphlets made showing those prestigious places listed as users.

Her business acumen shines forth in countless other ways; she entertains infrequently, but in memorable fashion when she does--she does not go out with businessmen to restaurants and bars because she feels they are used to going

to good ones already. Instead she breaks tradition by hosting them in grand style once a year at her home. Instead of giving gifts at the traditional seasons (July and December in Japan), Mrs. Tanaka does it at times when she will be more highly appreciated and remembered, during the nippachi, the months of February and August when all the gifts sent during the regular seasons have already been consumed.

In training her personnel, she attends to an array of minute detail and maintains an atmosphere of spareseness and thrift. She tries to present her business as smaller than it actually is. The office, still in the same small building she acquired after the war, is small and modest, encouraging an ethic of economy among the workers, and her employees reflect her attention to quality in their service. When I was interviewing her, her secretary served us tea and cake, and fruit in such an elegant manner I almost forgot that I was interviewing her in her office.

She knows the different personalities and abilities of each of her employees and treats them with the same care and difference that a mother might show to her children. She tries to correct the manners of her workers because unless she does so, they embarrass themselves when they are delaing with outsiders, she says.

She firmly believes that unless users are pleased with

the drugs they buy from her and unless she is of genuine use to them, her business cannot be expected to develop and prosper. She tries very hard to please her customers, and this in turn has become a source of satisfaction and joy to her.

She has one particular mentor, the above-mentioned professor of veterinary science from the University of Tokyo who gives her advice about, among other things, laboratory sites and installations. She considers that two or three other professionals in the field have been crucial to her success, but she has received little family help or guidance. On the contrary, she supported her mother and a younger brother for many years. She is very good at getting information and advice from professionals whenever she has questions. She values this sort of learning even more than monetary gains. She values interpersonal relations highly even in the business world.

Mrs. Tanaka's talent lies in her unique sense of timing and anticipation, her long-range planning ability, her desire to please the buyer, her attention to detail at all levels and in all aspects of the business, and in her step-by-step advancement through increasingly refined stages of business development.

After twenty years, her company now imports from various

countries in Europe medicines for chickens, pigs, cows, minks, dogs and cats, and sells them all over Japan. They also have a laboratory for producing and conducting research on vaccines for animals, and have subsidiary companies, such as Nippon Calmic Company which is a joint company with Burroughs Wellcome of England, and Aesop Pharmaceuticals which is a specialist company of medicines for pets. The total number of employees is more than three hundred and the business is still developing.

Conclusion:

While being cautious not to overgeneralize the similarities between these two case studies and Japanese businesswomen in general, it is true that they share many characteristics in common with other Japanese women in business. These two women were interviewed as part of a much larger sample (56) for a study on Japanese buinesswomen. Due to limitations of space, I have restricted myself to these two women, but they are representative of the larger sample.

It must first be noted that when talking about women in business in Japan it is most reasonable and appropriate to focus on women in small and medium sized organizations (where the power and presence of women have a long tradition), as represented by Mrs. Edo and Mrs. Tanaka, rather than big

corporations where women have only recently entered and where the number of women in managerial posts is still quite small due to short tenures and unequal treatment.

There are both close similarities and great differences between these two women. Mrs. Edo's business is traditional and labor-intensive, whereas Mrs. Tanaka's is modern and knowledge-intensive. However, both share the common factor of wanting to please by means of high quality and service, and both have placed this value high above the profit-making incentive. Both believed that long-range success and profit is derived from the ethic of hard work, trust and attention to detail in all areas of their respective businesses.

In both cases, they do not seem to think that their being a woman is in any way a disadvantage or hindrance in their business careers. They both appear to have taken advantage of being a woman by obtaining help and information from men, where men would have had greater difficulties. The lack of discrimination against Mrs. Edo is understandable as her business entails a specifically prescribed role for a woman, but Mrs. Tanaka, who is in a traditionally male sphere of business, has never experienced any discrimination because she was a woman.

I should point out there that there are many similarities between male and female managerial skills withim

Japanese culture. If, however, we compare male and female managers, we find that women tend to pay more attention to details and interpersonal relations, have a higher propensity to save and are more likely to retain the status quo rather than expand. The long tradition women have of being the keeper of the purse, distributor of food and clothing and general manager within the family has established their reputation as sound business managers with good solid judgement and is expressed in the phrase shiikari mono no okamisan. Most of the Japanese women managers interviewed had few difficulties in obtaining bank loans (contrary to our expectations) because bank managers think male managers spend money much more unnecessarily and extravagantly as compared to female managers.

The kinds of abilities valued in women in the workplace are those that are also valued in the home, i.e., nurturing, pleasing, serving others, attending to detail, and giving satisfaction from facilitating the promotion of others. And this is exactly what we have observed in these two women. It is not really surprising that it has not been difficult for these women who were brought up to be "good wives and wise mothers" to enter into the business world and be successful. As a matter of fact, both Mrs. Edo and Mrs. Tanaka's management style can be called "maternalistic," in that it pays attention to minute details, which they both seem to recognize as possible pitfalls. In addition, skills have

been derived from a traditional background of thrift, management and planning combined with an inclination toward stability and low risk-taking. Where men are more apt to gamble and take larger risks in order to gain larger profits, women tend to stick to smaller risks and more stable profits. Therefore, while missing the chance for windfall profits, they instead gain credibility in the eyes of bankers which facilitates the bank's willingness to make loans to women in general. As one banker commented, bank notes do not have any sex and it is irrational to take the sex of the person doing business into consideration. They both seem to have a strong belief that the relationship between the client and business person must be based upon trust and should extend beyond business dealings. It is clearly exemplified by the way Mrs. Edo sought advice from the president of Mitsui Construction Corporation.

Clearly, human relations are important in Japanese society, especially in the business world, even more so than managerial ability. This trait is even more prominent in female managers than in male managers. In motivational theory, as it has been applied to behavior in American and European culture, achievement and affiliation are seen as antagonistic needs given the competition inherent in the former and the need for close personal relationships in the latter. In Japan, however, it seems that achievement needs are fulfilled only through close personal relationships,

thereby joining both achievement and affiliation.

Both come from a large family. Mrs. Edo must have learned the importance of equal and fair treatment among people by being one of five sons and daughters. And this must have helped her smooth running of a big restaurant with many in-laws and live-in employees. Mrs. Tanaka's family is not as large as that of Mrs. Edo's, but those young workers in here father's dormitory were like extended family members and she must have observed her mother's management and equal treatment of everyone in the extended family. They both must have learned the importance of interpersonal relations and harmony within a group. Such family background and childhood experience provided a valuable place for training and learning by observation. Qualities such as empathy and personal care were highly developed in such a family environment.

Neither of them have professional or formal training in business or business degrees, but learned the trade by observing their elders--the mother-in-law in the case of Mrs. Edo and her father in the case of Mrs. Tanaka. But because they have no professional business training, they have had to rely on their own efforts, sincerity and industriousness. These qualities have become their assets in business dealings.

This has also determined their conviction in the value of learning from observation, "a deed is more eloquent a teacher than words." They work harder than anybody else at the workplace and set high standards of conduct for others to model. This is in line with the traditional Japanese method of teaching, i.e., learning from observation rather than the teaching of skills through verbal transmission of knowledge. I believe that learning from observation requires a great deal of involvement and initiative on the part of the learner and is often an easier way to learn because of its concreteness. I think that what has been learned through observation learning "sinks" deeper into the learner and therfore, last longer.

One striking contrast between Mrs. Edo and Mrs. Tanaka is that the former is passive in her business dealings as well as in her outlook toward life whereas the latter is active and quite broad and international in her outlook. I would assume that it is partly due to the fact that Mrs. Tanaka was born and raised in Korea where she must have met people other than Japanese in her everyday life. Therefore, it is rather natural for Mrs. Tanaka to think internationally and to have a broad perspective. This has helped Mrs. Tanaka in her importing business. Mrs. Tanaka is extremely independent while Mrs. Edo is not. Mrs. Tanaka does not have a husband or child to tie her down. Mrs. Tanaka has been free, and at times forced to make business judgments by

herself while Mrs. Edo has to uphold the history and tradition inherent in the good name of the restaurant.

There is a common saying in Japan "to eat from non-blood related people's rice cooker [Tanin no kama no meshi o kuu]." This implies that receiving training from other similar organizations would be a much better way for developing potential even when you can train your successor right at home or at your own organizations. Sending the successor away from a a well-protected home into the "cold world" is expected to make him/her strong, and therefore, he/she will be better prepared to succeed. This is exactly what these two women have done with respect to their successors.

What we have observed in these two women are the products of intricate interactions among persons, culture and natural conditions. It is interesting to see how both Japanese women's and men's skills, life strategies and practices will change with the gradual increase of women with managerial power in the Japanese business world and society at large.